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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to discover whether (1) use of each of the print and broadcast media could be correlated with subjects' knowledge level, and (2) whether controlling for dogmatism would increase the proportion of media users, with higher levels of knowledge among those less dogmatic, and decrease the proportion among the more dogmatic. Subjects were 347 adults in Brasilia, Brazil, who completed measures of dogmatism, knowledge of current events, and media use. Statistically significant associations were found between subjects' knowledge level and their use of the print media, but not of broadcast media. However, when a control for dogmatism was initiated, a statistically significant association between knowledge level and radio listening emerged among subjects who were relatively less dogmatic. The findings suggest that radio use can be very important in the education programs in developing nations. (FL)

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DOGMATISM AND THE "KNOWLEDGE GAP" AMONG USERS OF THE MASS MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION: A STUDY IN BRASÍLIA, BRASIL

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It has been demonstrated that social factors such as the formal education and the socialization of the individual in the family can affect the "knowledge gap" (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1971; Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman, 1972; Simmons and Garda, 1974), that is, the fact that under similar conditions, some individuals learn less than others. This research will examine whether a personality variable, dogmatism, impedes the individual's learning.

There is a linkage between dogmatism and knowledge-acquisition. Dogmatism is one indicator of information-processing complexity in the human (Schroder, Driver and Streufert, 1967). It evidently reflects the individual's learned repertoire of cognitive plans for remembering and thinking, and further elaboration of those facilitating cognitive structures.

The context for this study is the individual's learning of information that is associated principally with the mass media of communication. Such a focus is considered important because of the potential of mass media in efforts toward a process of permanent education, especially in the Third World or other developing nations. The importance of such activity has been given added emphasis by the Faure Commission (Faure, 1972).

Although there are numerous examples of research in developing countries that have dealt with aspects of psychological variables such as empathy and fatalism (including Lerner, 1958; Rogers, 1969; and Mishra, 1972), dogmatism has been largely overlooked as a factor affecting the effectiveness of the process of mass communication and learning. However, other research indicates that dogmatism is related to the processes or conditions of human cognition in a manner that can impede the processing of information.

In The Open and Closed Mind, Rokeach (1960) hypothesized that dogmatism restricted information-processing. Rokeach tested that hypothesis in a gaming situation and found that subjects who were relatively more dogmatic were less efficient than others in their ability to remember oral information, but not different in their ability to synthesize information.

Schroder, Driver and Streufert (1967) reported that dogmatism is correlated negatively with human cognitive complexity. Franklin and Carr (1971) discovered that subjects who scored relatively higher on a dogmatism scale manifested much more isolation of cognitive elements within their belief systems and less differentiation in their disbelief systems than other subjects. However, in another investigation, Burnett (1973) reported finding no statistically significant relationship between dogmatism and cognitive complexity.

There are indications that influences and opportunities in subcultures can be contingent conditions that affect the relationship between dogmatism and cognitive processes. In research with a sample of U.S. high school students, dogmatism was found to be correlated with information synthesis among a subsample of Negroes, but not among their white colleagues (Gmuer, 1972).

There also are indications that the difficulty of the task can affect the relationship between dogmatism and cognitive processes. Relatively more dogmatic subjects have been found to need more time than other subjects to obtain a solution in a complex situation (Fillenbaum and Jackman, 1961; Kemp, 1961 and 1972) although demanding less information prior to making a decision in a simple task (Long and Ziller, 1965; Pruitt, 1957; Robbins and Rogers, 1975).

Other research has found that relatively more dogmatic persons sense more mental discomfort than other subjects during tasks that demand high levels of cognitive force (Shaffer and Hendrick, 1975).

Discussing selective attention to information, Donohew and Palmgreen (1971) suggested that persons who are relatively less dogmatic are motivated by their cognitive style to receive and evaluate opposing and inconsistent propositions, despite the mental tension that might result, while relatively more dogmatic persons are characterized by a tendency to reject discrepant information. Chabassol and Thomas (1975) gave a partial explanation for that observation: They discovered that dogmatism was correlated nega-

tively with the tolerance of subjects in relation to ambiguity in a study among urban youths. However, in another research project, a hypothesis dealing with dogmatism as a predictor of selectivity in information-processing was not supported (Robbins, 1975).

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses in this investigation are as follows:

1. There exists a positive relationship between knowledge and use of the mass media of communication.

2. When a control is initiated for the level of dogmatism of the individual, the proportion of subjects who use the mass media of communication and have higher levels of knowledge will increase among the relatively less dogmatic subjects and decrease among the relatively more dogmatic subjects.

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

The research employed the concepts of dogmatism, knowledge, and use of the mass media of communication. The concepts were operationalized as follows:

Dogmatism--The items of the basic dogmatism scale (Form E) of Rokeach (1960) were translated to create conceptual equivalents in Portuguese. The translated items were evaluated in relation to acceptability for use in Brasil through the Thurstone scaling method. A short-form scale of six items was elaborated. The wording of the items:

1) Nunca "dou-ouvidos" ao que os outros falam. (I never listen to what others say.)
2) A vida têm sentido quando a gente acredita em alguma coisa. (Life has meaning when a person believes in something.)
3) Só existe uma filosofia correta. (There exists only one correct philosophy.)
4) O pior crime é atacar pessoas que têm as mesmas convicções que as nossas. (The worst crime is to attack people who have the same convictions.)
5) Meu sangue ferve quando outras pessoas não admitem que estão erradas. (My blood boils when others don't admit they're wrong.)
6) A maioria das pessoas não sabe o que é bom para elas. (Most people don't know what is good for them.)

The scale was administered in the form of declarations, with respondents using Likert-type categories to respond. Individual scale scores from six to thirty were possible. In the analysis, the distribution of scores was dichotomized, using the median as the cutting-point.

Knowledge--Six questions were applied. They dealt with relatively recent events related to the economy, politics, sports and government. The interview subject had to give short answers to prove knowledge. There were eight responses for six items in the knowledge scale. A simple summated scale was formed, with each correct answer counting one point and each incorrect one scored as zero. The distribution of responses was dichotomized as close as possible to the median: One to three correct responses constituted "low knowledge" and four to eight correct responses constituted "high knowledge."

Use of the Mass Media of Communication--Subjects were asked if they (a) read a newspaper "yesterday," (b) read a magazine during "the last week," (c) saw television "yesterday," (d) listened to the radio "yesterday," and (e) read a book "during the last month."

SAMPLING

The study was conducted in Brasília, the capital of Brasil. The sample included the "plano piloto," which is the central part of the city, as well as residential areas in the northern and southern peninsulas. A bit of explanation might help the reader visualize the area.

The "plano piloto" (pilot plan) has the form of a bow and arrow. The bow includes four large bands of residential areas designated as "superquadras" (superblocks). In addition to the "superquadras" in the four bands that parallel the superhighway that forms the bow of the city, there also is a fifth band that is comprised mainly by individual residence, but also includes some high-rise apartment buildings or condominiums.

Lake Paranoá, which forms a letter "C" and partly surrounds the

city, constitutes a limit to the east for the "plano piloto." On the other side of the lake from the city are situated residential areas, with individual homes.

Quota sampling was used in the study, largely because of cost and time considerations. Also, although the use of quota-sampling runs against methodological orthodoxy,* there is evidence supporting the contention that it can produce adequate results in a study of this type.

Carefully designed quota samples have been found in a comparative study to produce relatively small average differences of about three points (Cantril, 1945). Also, summarizing other comparative studies on quota sampling, Stephan and McCarthy (1958, p. 185) say that where known and unknown biases are involved, "the largest differences occur with respect to such factual variables as income, socio-economic status, education and the like." They continue: "Opinion and attitude variables do not show this extreme disagree-

*In the minds of many, if not most, social scientists today, the 1936 Literary Digest poll was to quota sampling what the Hindenberg was to commercial dirigibles. However, George Gallup who interpreted that polling fiasco has seen polls that were based on probability sampling encounter rough times, as well. In 1948, Gallup's organization predicted Dewey as the winner over Truman in the presidential election. In 1968, Gallup found himself trying to rationalize embarrassing contradictions between the Gallup, Crossley and Harris polls in that year's campaign and participated in the formation of the National Committee on Published Polls which aimed at preventing recurrences of the problem (Time, Aug. 9, 1968, p. 19). In the 1972 presidential campaigns, disparities of up to 17 percentage points were encountered between polls in regard to the standing of the same candidate (Newsweek, Oct. 19, 1972, p. 31). In the 1976 presidential campaigns, a comparative graphing of different polling organizations' reports over the campaign period showed some substantial differences and at the end Gallup's own organization incorrectly predicted Ford as the winner over Carter (Time, Oct. 25, 1976, p. 17, and Nov. 15, 1976, p. 19). Pollsters are cited because of their serious concern with methodology. Their reputations as well as the marketability of their products are dependent upon good results. The point being made is that many factors and many decisions affect whether any sampling method gives good results. And, as Kish (1967, p. 565) commented, even the Literary Digest poll produced good results for many years.

ment, even though the samples do not agree on factual characteristics."

Part of the problem with quota samples, as Kish (1967, p. 565) has observed, is that they often appear to have been less of a systematic methodology than an art form. That is, one investigator's "quota sampling" has had little resemblance to another's at many times. However, there are some orientation points for quota sampling. The sampling frame needs to be defined adequately, stratification data must be both current and relevant, sufficient geographic distribution of interviews must be attained, and interviewers need to be well-trained (Stephan and McCarthy, 1958).

Interviewer selection of subjects also presents more of a bias problem when the assigned areas are more heterogeneous in composition. In that case, relatively less common characteristics have a greater probability of being excluded from the sample if stratification does not deal with those characteristics.

Stephan and McCarthy (1958, p. 233) also report that sampling variability of quota samples that utilize standardized procedures can be "approximated in rough fashion by the variance of the binomial model for random sampling when it is multipled by a suitable factor of the order of 1.5." Check data also provide a means of testing for sampling precision (Stephan and McCarthy, 1958, pp. 134-155).

The quota sampling for the present study was accomplished in the following manner. First, interviews were allocated to residential areas in accordance with each area's weight as a proportion of the total population. Population data were obtained from recently updated reports of a government organization conducting studies in the city. Second, the subject selection was stratified by age and sex, utilizing the most recent census data of the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística.

The first step was designed to meet two problems common in quota sampling. One is that it ensured a relatively wide geographic

spread in interviewing area assignments. The other is that because of the relative homogeneity of housing costs within the subareas of the city, the proportional distribution of interviews has the effect of weighting for socio-economic status. Also, because of social and economic patterns in Brasília--e.g., families in which both husbands and wives work and receive similar incomes, or households in which both the husband and wife work but the wife earns the larger salary--traditional direct SES stratification procedures were a less satisfactory alternative.

Interviewing was executed by a team of individuals who had been trained in a survey research course in the Universidade de Brasília.

Three hundred and fifty interviews were completed. The necessity to weight the collected data was minimal. Seven cases were eliminated randomly (three in one category and four in another) and four randomly selected cases in one category were reproduced. The weighting procedure resulted in 347 cases for use in the analysis.

ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The statistical analysis in the investigation utilizes contingency tables and the chi-square to examine the data related to the first hypothesis. The method gives the investigators an adequate way to deal with dichotomized data and introduce the control variable. In the testing of the second hypothesis, the interest is in what changes will occur in the percentages in the "media user/high knowledge" cell between the table representing the whole sample and the tables in which the test factor is introduced. The second hypothesis states that when a control for dogmatism is introduced, the proportion of subjects in the "media use/high knowledge" cells will increase among those who are relatively less dogmatic and decrease among those who are relatively more dogmatic.

Although the emphasis in interpretation is on percentages in the tables, the phi coeficient, calculated on the basis of the chi-square, also will be reported. The phi coeficient is significant only when the chi-square for the same data is statistically significant. It is recognized that phi can attain a value of one (1) only when the proportions that represent the totals for lines and columns are divided .50/.50. In other cases, the coeficient phi-maximum is presented to indicate the maximum value that phi could attain in the given table. To facilitate comparisons between the phi coeficients, considering the limitation explained above, an adjusted-phi coeficient is presented. The adjusted-phi normalizes each phi coeficient on the basis of one (1), through use of the phi-maximum coeficient.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Table 1 shows that, in accordance with the first hypothesis, there is a significant chi-square for the association between the use of each printed medium of communication and knowledge. The first hypothesis also states that the relationship would be positive and that is the case. The first hypothesis, then, is accepted.

TABLE 1 GOES APPROXIMATELY HERE

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in those three cases. However, in relation to radio, only qualified support for the hypothesis is found. The percentages in Table 2 concerning radio-listening and knowledge are seen to be in accord with the hypothesis, but the chi-square is not statistically significant at the .05 level. The data for TV-viewing and knowledge do not support the first hypothesis. The table portrays a negative relationship, and the chi-square is not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Since it it known from advertising media-buyer' studies that 95 percent of the Brasília residences are TV households, the data concerning TV do not suggest problems related to differential ac-

cess. About 80 percent of the interviewees reported having watched TV "yesterday." The findings in the table seem more likely to be related to viewer perceptions of TV that affect their viewing patterns (e.g., that TV is mainly an entertainment medium) and also related to the strong preference for the Brasilian TV "novelas" and other entertaining programs such as variety shows and imported series. Time-budgeting also may affect program selection. Households in which both husbands and wives are employed professionally are reportedly more numerous in Brasília than in more traditional cities in the country. Another possible factor that could affect the situation is the information-handling of Brasilian TV. Network news programs are more than adequate in professional competence, but coverage seems to be more restrained than that of the print media, perhaps partly because of broadcasters' concerns about censor interventions. Consequently, serious information-seekers may be more dependent upon print media.

TABLE 2 GOES APPROXIMATELY HERE

If Rokeach (1960) is correct in hypothesizing that dogmatism affects memory, that is likely to provide a partial explanation of the findings relating to radio in Table 2. Rokeach's findings indicate that the processing of information that is transmitted orally constitutes a problem for persons with higher levels of dogmatism.

Now the analysis will examine what happens when dogmatism is controlled in data-elaboration tables.

Tables 3 through 7 present the comparisons between the total sample and the sub-samples, controlled for dogmatism. The first deals with the data for newspaper-reading.

TABLE 3 GOES APPROXIMATELY HERE

In accord with the second hypothesis, in the case of newspaper-

reading the introduction of a control for dogmatism is associated with an increase in the proportion of subjects in the "user/high knowledge" category (71% versus 63%) in the low dogmatism group and a decrease (52%, down from 63%) for those in the high dogmatism group . (See Table 3.) The chi-squares for the three sub-tables are statistically significant, indicating that the relationship between newspaper-reading and knowledge persists despite the control. Therefore, it appears that it is the effectiveness of information-processing that is affected, as the hypothesis suggests.

In Table 4, as in the previous case, when the relationship between magazine-reading and knowledge is controlled for dogmatism, the proportion of cases in the "user/high knowledge" category increases for those who are less dogmatic (66% versus 57%) and decreases (46%, down from 56%) among those who are relatively more dogmatic. The data support the second hypothesis. It also is seen that the relationship between magazine-reading and knowledge persists despite the introduction of the control: The chi-squares for all three sub-tables are significant at the .05 level. Once again, it appears that it is the effectiveness of information-processing that is affected.

TABLE 4 GOES APPROXIMATELY HERE

In Table 5, the introduction of the control for dogmatism results in an increase in the proportion of subjects in the "reader/high knowledge" category (64% versus 60%) among the less dogmatic subjects and a decrease (52%, down from 60%) among the more dogmatic subjects. The degree of change among the less dogmatic subjects, as compared with the total sample, is relatively small. However, the findings support the second hypothesis. A paradoxical situation arises when the chi-squares are examined. The chi-square for the association between book-reading and know-

TABLE 5 GOES APPROXIMATELY HERE

ledge was statistically significant at the .05 level for the whole sample. However, when dogmatism was introduced as a control, the chi-square continued to be significant among the high dogmatism group, but dropped below the .05 level for the low dogmatism group. The situation is neither the result of an accidental data transposition nor an artifact of the "N" for the table (which might affect the magnitude of the chi-square).

TABLE 6 GOES APPROXIMATELY HERE

Table 6 provides support for the second hypothesis in relation to radio-listening and knowledge. It can be seen that as compared with the sub-table for the whole sample, the proportion of subjects in the "listener/high knowledge" category increases (66% versus 54%) among the low dogmatism group and decreases (40%, down from 54%) among those in the high dogmatism group.

The table also presents another interesting finding. It was noted earlier that for the whole sample the relationship between radio-listening and knowledge was not found to be statistically significant at the .05 level. In Table 6, it is showed that dogmatism acts as a suppressor variable: After the introduction of the control, the chi-square for the low dogmatism group is statistically significant at the .05 level or beyond.

TABLE 7 GOES APPROXIMATELY HERE

The data in Table 7 support the hypothesis. It can be seen that as compared with the sub-table representing the whole sample, the proportion of subject in the "viewer/high knowledge" category increases (56% versus 48%) for those in the low dogmatism group and decreases (37%, down from 48%) in the high dogmatism group. It

should be noted that the chi-squares are not statistically significant at the .05 level for any of the three sub-tables.

CONCLUSIONS

Statistically significant associations were found between subjects' knowledge and their use of the print media, but not use of broadcast media. However, when a control for dogmatism was initiated, a statistically significant association between knowledge and radio-listening emerged among subjects who were relatively less dogmatic.

The latter finding, which is in accord with Rokeach's discovery (1960) that persons with lower levels of dogmatism evidently have an advantage over relatively more dogmatic individuals in the processing of oral information, has considerable importance for the use of radio in development and education programs. The other findings reported in relation to Tables 3 through 7 where dogmatism was introduced as a control variable, indicate, however, that dogmatism is an indicator of a broader difference in information-processing efficiency that affects how well individuals learn from all of the mass media of communication.

Our previous research with the same sample indicates that dogmatism and formal education are correlated negatively.* The reason, it is hypothesized, is that formal education works systematically to develop cognitive plans that provide the individual with rules and procedures to use to (a) analyze attributes of stimuli, (b) determine what cognitive operations are relevant, and (c) perform further operations on incoming information. Formal education also helps the individual to develop or elaborate other types of cognitive plans that serve to facilitate short-term memory (e.g.,

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*A manuscript reporting research concerning relationships between dogmatism, family socialization and formal education has been accepted for publication by Chasqui, the communication journal of CIESPAL, Quito, Ecuador.

association, grouping and mental rehearsal), synthesis and long-term memory. Dogmatism appears to be an indicator of the extent of the individual's development of such cognitive plans.

The findings of the present study seem to have particular importance for the planners of development and education programs that deal with clients who are of lower educational levels. The authors have attempted to document a logical linkage above that suggests a strong probability that the characteristics that are associated with dogmatism will be found among sub-populations with lower levels of formal education: That is, it is likely that persons with less formal education will demonstrate less efficient information-processing, as did the high-dogmatism group in this study.

Since many development and education projects depend upon mass communication, particularly radio, cinema and TV, it seems worth investigating whether and how the impact of dogmatism on information-acquisition might be moderated by manipulation of content relevance, repetition and feedback control and the introduction of prefabricated cognitive plans in the message strategy (e.g., use of mnemonics) to facilitate remembering or thinking operations.

In regard to the discussion introduced about sampling, the authors also would recommend further study about quota sampling. That method has an obvious economic advantage, something that is not inconsequential in view of economic inflation's impact on research costs. There is a need for comparative studies that are both carefully designed and executed and in which detailed administrative records are kept. Those conditions have been met too rarely in studies of quota sampling that the authors have encountered.

TABLE 1

Use of the printed mass media of communication, and the knowledge of the individual

	Medium of communication used					
	Newspapers		Magazines		Books	
Knowledge	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
High	63%	32%	57%	36%	60%	43%
Low	37%	68%	43%	64%	40%	57%
N	(197)	(150)	(227)	(119)	(125)	(220)
Chi-square	32.62		13.37		9.02	
Probability	< 0.05		< 0.05		< 0.05	
Phi	0.31		0.20		0.16	
Phi max	0.87		0.73		0.76	
Phi adjusted	0.36		0.27		0.21	

TABLE 2

Use of the electronic mass media of communication, and the knowledge of the individual

	Medium of communication used			
	Radio		Television	
Knowledge	Yes	No	Yes	No
High	54%	44%	48%	56%
Low	46%	56%	52%	44%
N	(199)	(142)	(276)	(71)
Chi-square	3.73		2.38	
Probability	< 0.05		< 0.05	
Phi	0.10		0.08	
Phi max	0.85		0.50	
Phi adjusted	0.12		0.17	

TABLE 3

Association between the use of newspapers and the knowledge of the individual, controlled for the level of dogmatism

Knowledge	WHOLE SAMPLE Read "Yesterday" Yes	No	SUBSAMPLE: LOW DOGMATISM Read "Yesterday" Yes	No	SUBSAMPLE: HIGH DOGMATISM Read "Yesterday" Yes	No
High	63%	32%	71%	38%	52%	24%
Low	37%	68%	29%	62%	48%	76%
N	(197)	(150)	(111)	(74)	(86)	(74)
Chi-square	32.62		20.23		13.06	
Probability	< 0.05		< 0.05		< 0.05	
Phi	0.31		0.33		0.28	
Phi max	0.87		0.96		0.86	
Phi adjusted	0.36		0.34		0.33	

TABLE 4

Association between magazine-reading and the knowledge of the individual, controlled for the level of dogmatism

Knowledge	WHOLE SAMPLE Read Yes	No	SUBSAMPLE: LOW DOGMATISM Read Yes	No	SUBSAMPLE: HIGH DOGMATISM Read Yes	No
High	57%	36%	66%	45%	46%	26%
Low	43%	64%	34%	55%	54%	74%
N	(227)	(119)	(119)	(65)	(106)	(54)
Chi-square	13.37		7.57		6.18	
Probability	< 0.05		< 0.05		< 0.05	
Phi	0.20		0.20		0.20	
Phi max	0.73		0.86		0.90	
Phi adjusted	0.27		0.23		0.22	

TABLE 5

Association between book-reading and the knowledge of the individual, controlled for tne level of dogmatism

	WHOLE SAMPLE		SUBSAMPLE: LOW DOGMATISM		SUBSAMPLE: HIGH DOGMATISM	
	Read		Read		Read	
Knowledge	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
High	60%	43%	64%	54%	52%	32%
Low	40%	57%	36%	46%	48%	68%
N	(125)	(220)	(73)	(112)	(50)	(108)
Chi-square	9.02		2.12		5.54	
Probability	< 0.05		> 0.05		< 0.05	
Phi	0.16		0.11		0.18	
Phi max	0.76		0.90		0.86	
Phi adjusted	0.21		0.12		0.21	

TABLE 6

Association between radio-listening and the knowledge of the individual, controlled for the level of dogmatism

	WHOLE SAMPLE		SUBSAMPLE: LOW DOGMATISM		SUBSAMPLE: HIGH DOGMATISM	
	Listened		Listened		Listened	
Knowledge	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
High	54%	44%	66%	47%	40%	40%
Low	46%	56%	34%	53%	60%	60%
N	(199)	(142)	(107)	(73)	(91)	(68)
Chi-square	3.73		6.99		0.0003	
Probability	> 0.05		< 0.05		> 0.05	
Phi	0.10		0.19		0.001	
Phi max	0.85		0.98		0.94	
Phi adjusted	0.12		0.19		0.001	

TABLE 7

Association between television-viewing and the knowledge of the individual, controlled for the level of dogmatism

	WHOLE SAMPLE		SUBSAMPLE: LOW DOGMATISM		SUBSAMPLE: HIGH DOGMATISM	
	Viewed TV		Viewed TV		Viewed TV	
Knowledge	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
High	48%	56%	56%	64%	37%	50%
Low	42%	44%	44%	36%	63%	50%
N	(276)	(71)	(149)	(36)	(126)	(34)
Chi-square	2.39		0.67		2.04	
Probability	λ 0.05		λ 0.05		λ 0.05	
Phi	0.08		0.06		0.11	
Phi max	0.50		0.56		0.64	
Phi adjusted	0.17		0.11		0.18	

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